

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION.

Tuesday, April 6. 1708.

I Have in my last given you a Hint from *Edinburgh* of the Matter of Fact, with Respect to the Behaviour of the *Presbyterians* upon this Occasion of a *French* Invasion. Now pray, Gentlemen, let me expostulate a little with you here upon your barbarous ENGLISH WAY of treating People in the World, damning Nations, Churches, Families and Persons upon ignorant Conjectures, malicious Suggestions, and Party-projected Rumours.

Among your selves you may go on, and follow your old Trade, be *True-Born-English-men* to the End of the Chapter, and make your selves, as you do, the most contemptible People in the World, as to good Nature and good Manners; but while you are dealing with other People, with Nati-

ons of distinct Original, and however despised by you, I assure you, much better taught in this Respect, you ought upon my Word to show more Discretion; both with Respect to Justice, and with Respect to your own Characters.

Again are we uniting with these People, united with Respect to Settlement, and uniting with Respect to cultivating and improving that Settlement; and is this your Policy? Is this the Way to convince them of their mistaken Aversion to us, to show them they shall be well us'd, tender'd as Brethren, and valued as our selves? Is this your Method to engage them to you, and encourage them to stand hard and fast against Invaders and Pretenders? For Shame, let us blush as a Nation, and either learn more

more Temper, or leave off calling our selves by all the fine Names of Generous, Just and Great; to be Honest is alone to be Honourable, and to do Justice is to be Brave; base Actions, whether in Nations or Men, are the Effects of Cowardice and Meanness of Soul; a Man of Honour dares not be a Villain; Nations of Honour never fall into general Baseness.

Let us reflect upon the Treaty of Union, by which we were marry'd to this Wife—What Vows did we make, what Protestations of Respect, what Pretensions to love her, what Promises of good Usage to her, what Jointures of Commerce and Protection did we offer, while we courted her? And do we use her thus the very first Year? Ungrateful *England*! Ill-natur'd *England*! what, call your Wife WHORE the first Year, nay in the very Honey-Moon of your Wedlock?—And while you cannot charge her with the least ill Behaviour or Immorality in her Conduct; this is barbarous indeed, and in short it is not to be justify'd, either to our Religious or our Politick Understandings.

Why the Man's mad! Will all our Street Railers say now—he raves at his own Nation, he is libelling his own Country again, as an Author lately call'd his True-Born-Englishmen? No, no, Gentlemen, I am not libelling you, but it is you are libelling yourselves by the horrid Methods you take with your Neighbours; while against all Justice, Truth, reasonable Suspicion, or apparent Probability, you fly upon your new-united Friends with Volleys of unsufferable Slander, and reproach them with joining themselves to an Enemy, to whom they have the strongest Aversion; an Enemy against whom they have on all Occasions declar'd themselves, in spite of whose ancient Invasions, tho' assisted by the Tyrannick Power of a Popish Queen, they establish'd the Reformation; an Enemy under whom, take them as the Race pretending to be restor'd to govern, they endured the most violent Persecution, and always resisted even to the Death.

The Address from the Principal and Professors of the Colledge of *Edinburgh* gives this a very just, tho' a modest Remark, being offer'd to the QUEEN upon this Oc-

It fills us with Amazement, that there should be the least Ground to think, that any of your Subjects that profess the Protestant Religion, and who enjoy a profound Peace under your Majesty's mild Administration, should either have encourag'd such a mischievous Design, or wish its Success, which would deprive us of the Best of Sovereigns, and which hath a plain Tendency to enslave your Dominions, ruin the Protestant Interest, and fill Europe with all the Miseries that would attend the Arbitrary and Tyrannical Power of the declared Enemy of her Liberties.

Indeed it may well fill us with Amazement, that there should be any Ground to think, &c. But really it fills all honest Men with Amazement, that People should think thus without Ground, that we should censure the poor People as Rebels, and as courting a *French* Invasion, without the least Ground—This is the Slander I am speaking of, which we ought to be asham'd of, and to disown our very Names for being drawn into.

To descend now to the Case more particularly; I think, I need not go about to prove, that these honest People have not countenanc'd the Enemy, that they have no hand in the Design, nor the least Inclination to favour it—Their Readiness to offer themselves to the Expence of their Blood in opposing it, is a most convincing Proof of that Part, and their Behaviour in settling Measures for their effecting those Resolutions put it out of all Question, and even their very Enemies begin now to acknowledge.

But I must pretend to tell you this is not all, but there really never was the least sufficient Ground to suspect them; and this will lead me to examine some Cases, and make some Parallels.

First, I am to examine the Uneasinesses of these People about the Union, from whence all this Clamour has been pretended to be raised—Secondly, Their Scruples of the Abjuration-Oath—which coming just at such a Juncture as this, has been improv'd to corroborate our Suspicions, and as it were to fix the Scandal upon them; and a true Stating these, will effectually clear up the Reputation of this honest People, and by Consequence leave us all under *Solomon's* Censure, for judging a Matter before we heard it.

If any object my Plainness in this Case, and tell me I am too hard upon my own Country, and that if it is an Error, an *Englishman* ought not to tell it; or if they please to threaten me, as I have been often serv'd, when I take the freedom with you, to tell you your own; my Answer is very short.

The Vindication of an injur'd People, now part of our Selves, the Debt due to them, and Truth in the true stating this Matter; the putting a stop to a Practice so Dishonourable and Unnatural, are things far more necessary than concealing your Mistakes, which only assists you in continuing in them——As to your Anger, it has never been my way to fear the Displeasure either of Person or Nation, when I am to publish NEEDFUL TRUTH—That it is True, and that is Necessary, are the two only Qualifications I think my self oblig'd to regard; and here I am satisfi'd in both: if therefore you will hear no more of your ill-treatment of innocent Neighbours, you have an excellent way to prevent it and silence every Accusation, (*viz.*) REFORM IT.

And now let us see into the mighty Foundation, upon which this black building of Reproach has been erected; and what have been the Pretences from which the *Presbyterians* in *Scotland*, have been charged with a Design to joyn with the Pretender?—And really this will be a new Satyr upon *Englishmen*, and blacken the very History of these Times to Posterity, when they shall see how partially we judge, how unjustly censure, and how rashly we condemn.

Let us put the Objection in the roughest Terms we can; for really Gentlemen, I'll do you all the Justice I can, tho' it is but a dirty Business, and at best will leave you with sooty Consciences and down Looks.

Why, these People were professedly against the UNION, their common People rabbled against it, their Representatives on all occasions protested against it; their Advocates Printed against it, their Ministers preach'd and pray'd against it, and upon all occasions they have rail'd at it, shewn themselves uneasy at it, and declared th-

selves willing to have it dissolved again.

Now all this may be allow'd to be true, and much more if it were required; and yet the Consequence drawn from these Premises, is the most unjust, the most barbarous, and most horrid way of using the *Scots* that can possibly be imagin'd—To make this appear, a short distinction may be made, which would clear it up all, and I dare say, you will allow it necessary to make such a Distinction.

We ought to distinguish of the *Reasons why*, and *Grounds from whence* the Aversions of these People did flow, and when you will please to compare them with the *Reasons and Grounds* of other Parties both there and here, the Mask will be taken off from our Censures, and we shall perhaps find, that the first Rise of this unjust Charge was taken from a Party, who really espousing the Interest of this Foreign Pretender, formed this Accusation to divide us, to render suspected to us, the Body of Men best qualify'd in the World to suppress the Invasion, and so weaken the Hands of the Government in opposing it: To clear up this, let me enter into the several Dissatisfactions of Parties with respect to the UNION.

1. The *Presbyterians* who were averse to, and declared against the Union, were so from their Apprehensions of their being Subjected by it, to the Suffrage of the *English* Clergy in the Parliament, and their Mistakes about it being in the Power of a *British* Parliament, to alter the *Postulata* made for the Security of the *Kirk*—By which Episcopacy might in Time be restor'd in *Scotland*, and the *Kirk* be sent a begging for the Grace of Toleration.
2. Others found themselves uneasy upon the Account of the Obligation of the National Covenant, by which they being firmly bound by Oath against the establishing Episcopacy, and the Union, obliging *Scotland* to joyn in the Establishment and Security of the Church of *England* which is Episcopal, they deem'd it impossible to joyn with *England*